

Message Text

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70

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3197

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

USMISSION USUN NY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, PINS, AG, CI, BR, AR

SUBJ: GOA LOW KEYS OPERATION BUENOS AIRES REFUGEES

1. OFFICIAL MEDIA CONFINED THEMSELVES TO ONE STORY ON ARRIVAL OF 17 REFUGEES (16 CHILEAN AND 1 BRAZILIAN) WHO HAD OCCUPIED UN OFFICE IN BUENOS AIRES AND WHO WERE SUBSEQUENTLY GRANTED ASYLUM IN ALGIERS OCTOBER 11. NO EDITORIAL COMMENT ACCOMPANIED NEWS ITEM.

2. FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT ASSIGNED HERE TELLS US THAT QUOTE PRESS CONFERENCE UNQUOTE HELD BY REFUGEES ON ARRIVAL WAS RATHER SORRY AFFAIR. BRAZILIAN, WHO SERVED AS SPOKESMAN, WAS SO HOARSE HE COULD HARDLY SPEAK AND CHILEANS SEEMED VERY APATHETIC AND APOLITICAL CROWD. GOA, CORRESPONDENT NOTED, INTENDED TO GIVE NEW REFUGEES SAME STATUS AS NUMEROUS OTHER LATIN AMERICAN POLITICAL OBJECTORS ALREADY IN THIS COUNTRY. CORRESPONDENT THOUGHT THAT NEW GROUP WOULD HOLD MORE FORMAL PRESS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 15. SO FAR NO WORD ON THIS HAS APPEARED IN PRESS.

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3. SAME CORRESPONDENT TOLD US THAT DECISION TO GRANT

ASYLUM TO REFUGEES WAS BOUTEFILKA'S. WHEN ISSUE CAME UP AT UN, BOUTEFILKA APPARENTLY DECIDED ON SPUR OF MOMENT TO MAKE A GESTURE.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE GRANTING OF ASYLUM TO CHILEANS, AND TO PALESTINIANS WHO SEIZED EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN MADRID LAST MONTH, WE BELIEVE GOA BASIC OPPOSITION TO SERVING AS HAVEN TO TERRORISTS REMAINS. GOA SEEMS TO HAVE ALLOWED PALESTINIANS TO COME HERE LARGELY ON BASIS OF PRESIDENT SADAT'S APPEAL TO PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENE AND MADE IT CLEAR IT ONE-TIME HUMANITARIAN AFFAIR. GESTURE TOWARD CHILEANS APPEARS LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN DECISION TAKEN BY BOUTEFILKA ON IMPULSE AND WITHOUT CONSULTATION.

5. WITH RESPECT TO PALESTINIANS, WE UNDERSTAND THAT ATTITUDE OF GOA, AND OF LOCAL PLO REP, QUITE HARSH. TERRORISTS APPARENTLY GIVEN VERY SMALL OFFICIAL HELLO AND MAY WELL HAVE BEEN HUSTLED OFF TO LIBYA BY NOW. PLO REP SAID TO HAVE BEEN MOST RELUCTANT EVEN TO GO TO AIRPORT WHEN TERRORISTS ARRIVED AND DID SO ONLY AT GOA INSISTENCE. PARKER

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